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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 26 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. SETH (India)

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Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMEN OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE (E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49 and Add.1; E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Programme Committee to present the Committee's recommendations for approval by the Board.

2. Mr. WARD (Chairman of the Programme Committee) said that the Committee was submitting to the Executive Board for approval the draft recommendations contained in documents E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49 and Add.1.

3. Mr. BERENDSEN (Netherlands), referring to the draft recommendation relating to Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43), whose approval the Programme Committee was recommending in document E/ICEF/1992/P/L.49/Add.1, recalled that his delegation had stressed, at an earlier plenary meeting, the universal character of the United Nations system in general, and of UNICEF in particular, and the criteria to be applied to countries qualifying for UNICEF assistance. The recommendation in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43 made a distinction between qualifying and non-qualifying countries. His delegation took it that qualifying countries were those listed in paragraph 47 of document E/ICEF/1992/P/L.40 and that any revision of that list would have to be approved at a session of the Board; paragraph 5 of the recommendation, however, did not differentiate between the two categories. If the recommendation was not intended to apply to both categories, it would have to be made clear that activities in non-qualifying countries remained restricted in time, area and amount and limited, as far as technical assistance was concerned, to exceptional circumstances. Since non-qualifying countries, too, needed assistance in the area of policy formulation, his delegation approved the recommendation urging UNICEF to keep the limited time-frame in mind in setting out those activities.

4. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation strongly supported the principle of universality throughout the United Nations system. While appreciating the urgent needs of the region in question, it nevertheless shared the concerns voiced by the previous speaker. On a wider issue, it attached great importance to the examination, by the governing bodies of United Nations agencies and funds and by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at their 1992 sessions, of ways to promote an integrated approach, which was a key issue for the United Nations development system.

5. Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that her delegation emphasized the need for all United Nations activities in the region concerned to be carefully coordinated, and welcomed the reference, in the recommendation in question, to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCP). It was important that overheads and administrative costs should be kept as low as possible and not arbitrarily

(Ms. Pollack, United States)

covered from programme resources. Her delegation understood that the activities in question would be funded from some of the savings discussed earlier; it also encouraged UNICEF activities aimed at national capacity-building with a view to self-sustaining future action.

6. Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director, Programmes) said that the secretariat had no difficulty with the statements by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. He was not sure, however, about the point raised by the United States delegation, since the issue of funding out of savings, although discussed in the Drafting Committee, had not been reflected in the recommendation, one reason being that, under the UNICEF budgetary process, it was difficult to relate savings achieved in one year to allocations in another year. The secretariat was ready to take up the matter informally with the United States delegation.

7. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the understanding that the statements by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States would be reflected in the summary record, she would take it that the Executive Board approved the recommendations submitted by the Programme Committee.

8. It was so decided.

9. The CHAIRMAN invited the Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance to present the Committee's recommendations for approval by the Board.

10. Mr. KOIKE (Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Finance) said that the Committee was submitting to the Executive Board for approval the draft recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19. With regard to the draft recommendation on Central and Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43), the Committee was recommending that the Board should approve the increases proposed in paragraph 5 of that recommendation, which would be included in the revised budget estimates for the biennium 1992-1993 and the proposed budget estimates for the biennium 1994-1995.

11. Mr. KAARIA (Finland), referring to paragraph 5 of the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43, reiterated his delegation's concern that UNICEF activities in countries in transition should not be financed from the administrative and programme support budget. His delegation was disappointed that the agreement reached at one stage of the discussions about the use of accrued savings as a source of funding had not prevailed, because of difficulties pointed out by the secretariat. Bearing in mind, however, the need for adequate financing to ensure that the vital role of UNICEF in the countries concerned was maintained, his delegation was prepared to accept the text of paragraph 5 in a spirit of consensus. In that connection, it noted the statement just made by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes.

12. Mr. BLACKMAN (Barbados) drew attention to a slight textual discrepancy between paragraph 20 of document E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.19 and paragraph 5 of the recommendation in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.43. The former referred to two additional General Service core posts; in the latter, however, the word "core" did not appear.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the understanding that the statements by Finland and Barbados would be reflected in the summary record, she would take it that the Executive Board approved the recommendations submitted by the Committee on Administration and Finance.

14. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

15. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.35, on an update of "An overview of UNICEF policies, organization and working methods".

16. The draft recommendation was adopted.

17. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.33, on Universal Children's Day.

18. The draft recommendation was adopted.

19. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.36, on the report of the Executive Director: proposals for United Nations reform.

20. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) noted that the title of the draft recommendation referred to "United Nations reform". His delegation had no wish to block a consensus, but felt that the title did not exactly reflect the content - reform of the United Nations as a whole went far beyond the scope of the recommendation. Accordingly, it proposed that the title should read "Proposals for reform in the operational activities of the United Nations system".

21. Ms. CORNAZ (Switzerland), Mr. MINAGAWA (Japan) and Mr. KAARIA (Finland) seconded the proposal.

22. The draft recommendation, as orally amended, was adopted.

23. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.45, on governance in the Executive Board.

24. The draft recommendation was adopted.

PREPARATION FOR FUTURE SESSIONS AND REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION

25. The CHAIRMAN invited the Board to adopt the draft recommendation contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.27, on rotation of the Executive Board chairmanship.

26. The draft recommendation was adopted.

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that in its decision 1992/5 on its future work and procedures, the Executive Board had requested the secretariat to provide it at its regular sessions with a table indicating the subjects included in the agenda for the previous, present and two subsequent years. At the same time it had been agreed that the Board would review the issues to be included in the agenda for the following session, with a view to eliminating those items which were no longer relevant or on which less frequent reporting was required. A consolidated list of documents requested for future sessions had been prepared and was before members for comments.

28. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that the list of documents requested for 1993 was very daunting. His delegation would be considering it with great care and looked forward with keen interest to the recommendations on governance in the Executive Board.

29. Ms. VOGEL (United States of America) noted that page 1 of the consolidated list mentioned a report on progress made on the study to be proposed by the Executive Director to the Joint UNICEF/WHO Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) to examine national and multinational corporations' marketing practices for infant food. Her delegation felt that the report was not needed, since WHO had shared with the Board its progress in that area at a recent JCHP meeting and UNICEF had not been asked to undertake a study.

30. Mr. TREPCZYNSKI (Poland) agreed that the volume of documentation must be reduced. There was a possible duplication of effort, in that page 5 of the list mentioned two requests for papers relating to family planning activities.

31. Mr. WARD (Canada) noted that the consolidated list gave the Bureau a new mechanism for looking at all requested reports. If delegations could review that list and make suggestions by 31 August, some documents could possibly be compressed or combined.

32. Ms. CORNAZ (Switzerland) concurred with the representative of Canada and proposed that the analysis of documents with a view to their rationalization could be conducted on the basis of the procedure whereby, in the Executive Board, subjects for regular discussion were normally dealt with every two years, while more urgent matters came up for discussion annually. Certain "annual" subjects might not deserve such treatment and could be made biennial.

33. She noted that some of the documents listed, for instance "Measures taken by UNICEF with regard to strengthening of national capacities" on page 3, were not in fact separate documents but simply chapters of the Executive Director's report.

34. Mr. FIDHAMMER (Norway) said he understood that the Bureau was to make recommendations on the consolidation of documents to the Executive Board at its organizational session. He wondered whether that might not be rather late for the Board's 1993 deliberations and whether there was not some better way of proceeding.

35. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Executive Board) said that the February 1993 organizational session would indeed be too late for suggestions on the consolidation of documents due for consideration at the regular session in April-May 1993. One alternative procedure might be for the Bureau to review the agenda for 1993 at its September 1992 meeting and to make recommendations to the Executive Board as to which items could be consolidated or given priority. The Bureau might make the changes on its own or consult Executive Board members by mail, or else a special session could be held as soon as possible after the September meeting.

36. Mr. KAARIA (Finland) noted that the nature of the listed documents varied quite considerably; the Bureau might wish to take that into account in consolidating them and see to it that policy documents were kept separate from factual reports.

37. Mr. GUO Xianzhi (China) said that far too many reports had been requested for future sessions, with no fewer than 54 requested for the 1993 session alone. He suggested that the secretariat should analyse the documents with a view to consolidating those of the same kind. He hoped that reports would, in future, be shorter and more readable.

38. Ms. MOLSON (Canada) recalled that a resolution had been adopted according to which reports emanating from the floor need not be produced by the Executive Board, yet several such reports appeared on page 5 of the consolidated list. Other reports on that page were described as emanating from the secretariat, yet if that was so, they must be in response to a resolution and should logically appear in the section on resolutions.

39. Mr. KLINK (Observer for the Holy See) welcomed the observations of the representative of Canada. It was unclear how documents "emanating from the floor" could have the same weight as those arising from resolutions, since the purpose of the Executive Board's deliberations was to determine which issues needed to be reported on.

40. Mr. HUSSEIN (Ethiopia) endorsed the remarks by the representative of China. Documents should be brief and their numbers should be limited.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.